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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

7 October 1973

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

MIDDLE EAST

Situation Report Number 6
(As of 0630 EDT)

THE MILITARY SITUATION

EGYPTIAN FRONT

1. The Egyptians erected at least four floating bridges across the Canal during the night, but at least one was destroyed, according to the Israelis. Despite the presence of numerous Egyptian troops on the east side of the Canal.

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The Egyptians are in control of the east bank of the Canal from the Gulf of Suez to the Great Bitter Lake, according to the chief of the UN truce supervision team in Jerusalem.

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2. The Israeli Air Force became more active at daylight. Heavy reconnaissance activity was in evidence near Ismailiyah, Salihiyah airfield, and west of the Canal in general. It appears also that at least one Egyptian airfield was bombed.

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3. A number of the Israeli craft that had been patrolling near Port Said apparently returned to Ashdod for refueling. Meanwhile, an Israeli aircraft reportedly sank a possible Egyptian missile boat north of Port Said. The Israelis also claim to have sunk two rubber rafts and a small patrol boat carrying raiding parties toward Sinai in the Gulf of Suez.

4. The Israelis admit the loss of some 60-80 men killed and five aircraft downed. The Israelis estimate that Arab losses are five to ten times as many men, 17 aircraft, 14 helicopters, and 60 tanks. Arab claims of Israeli losses of aircraft are much higher.

5. The Israelis remain confident that they will be able to regain all the territory they have lost and will give the Arabs a hard lesson as well. They appear to be concentrating on containing the Syrian thrust first before turning their attention to the Egyptians. Some Israeli reserves are entering the battle in the Sinai.

6. The US Interests Section reports from Cairo that downtown streets were filling this morning; public transportation was running, and in general activity was only slightly different than normal. However, schools have closed until further notice and some foods and fuels are being rationed. Cairo press attention to US support for Israel so far has been in moderate terms.

SYRIAN FRONT

7. The Syrian advance and limited gains in the Golan Heights area, according to late reports from the Israelis, have been stemmed. Early this morning, after an overnight lull, Israeli aircraft returned in force and, presumably in conjunction with the ground forces, attacked targets in the Heights.

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SOVIET MILITARY ACTIVITY

9. Most Soviet naval forces in the eastern Mediterranean are withdrawing from the areas of conflict in an apparent continuation of their hands-off policy. The Soviet ships appear to be heading toward a rendezvous in the vicinity of Crete. Early this morning two Soviet ships departed Latakia in Syria where they apparently had been taking on Soviet advisors and civilians for evacuation from the war zone. One Soviet Kashin-class guided missile destroyer, plus some auxiliaries, remain in Alexandria harbor.

SOVIET POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

10. Soviet press reaction to the outbreak of hostilities continues to be sparse. No Soviet leader has issued a statement on the crisis, but a message from Soviet party leader Brezhnev was delivered to President Sadat late yesterday by the Soviet ambassador in Cairo. The contents of the message were not revealed. At the UN, the Soviet Mission continues to support Egypt's preference to have the crisis debated in the veto-free General Assembly rather than the Security Council. Ambassador Scali reports that Soviet Ambassador Malik told the Security Council President that the USSR is against bringing the matter before the Security Council. At home, the Soviets are proceeding with normal business including the visit of Prime Minister Tanaka, who arrives today in Moscow.

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OTHER ARAB STATES

11. Iraq this morning took the lead in cracking down on US oil interests by nationalizing the Exxon and Mobil Oil shares of the Basra Petroleum Company, a subsidiary of the Iraq Petroleum Company whose Kirkuk properties had been taken over in June 1972. President Bakr has pledged Iraq's full support, but as yet no new Iraqi forces, to the battle.

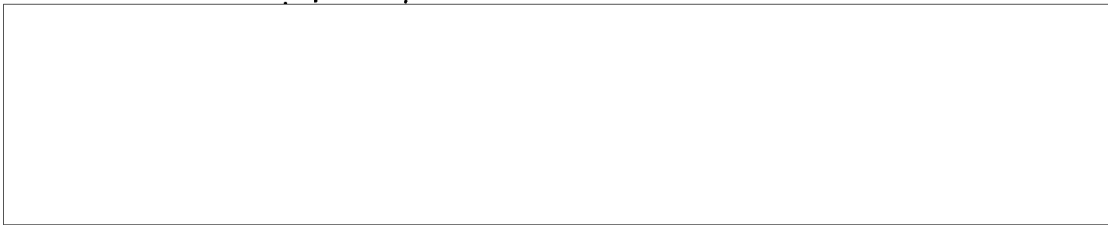
12. Libyan President Qadhafi, another likely candidate to use oil as a weapon, reportedly will make a speech today. Tripoli Radio last night appealed to the Jordanian Army to join in the fight and "remove the disgrace brought upon them by their rulers."

13. The US Embassy in Khartoum reports that Sudanese President Numeiry has offered troops to Asad and Sadat and has placed ports and airports at the disposal of Arab forces.

14. Beirut Radio has reported that the Lebanese military has been placed on alert. Lebanon Prime Minister Solh yesterday expressed to Ambassador Bufum his concern about possible Israeli aggression against Lebanon. At a meeting of the UN mixed armistice commission, the Israelis had protested the fact that a Syrian plane had landed at a Lebanese military airfield earlier that day and taken off again. The Israelis said that if there were repetitions of such activity Lebanon would suffer grave consequences. Solh denied that Lebanon had given any assistance to the aircraft and said Beirut would fight only if attacked. Prime Minister Solh emphasized Lebanon's strong desire to stay out of the battle. He said key Palestinian leaders had been called in and told Lebanon would not tolerate their causing any trouble.

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NO FOREIGN DISSEM

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16. The Palestinian news agency Wafa has reported that Yasir Arafat is personally commanding the military operations being carried out by the Palestinian revolutionaries. The resistance movement claims that its commandos ambushed a 12-vehicle military convoy in the Latroun area of the Israeli occupied west bank of Jordan yesterday. It also said that another commando unit attacked an Israeli military vehicle on the Khodeira-Haifa road. According to an intercepted message from Fatah headquarters in southern Lebanon, Palestinian positions in the area are being shelled and the fedayeen are firing on settlements in northern Israel. A platoon from Saiqa forces will be placed at the disposal of the Palestinian Liberation Army.

AMERICANS INVOLVEDREGISTRY

17. Romantica, a ship of Greek ~~registry~~ bearing over 200 Americans is reportedly being delayed in Tartus because some of the passengers are Jewish.

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